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OO RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHAB #1083 2691625
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 261625Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1963
RUEANHA/FAA HQ WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBSA/FAA EUROPE AFRICA MID EAST RGN HQ BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1446

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 001083

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CI](#) [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [FAA](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: IVOIRIAN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS LAUNCH SURPRISE
STRIKE

¶1. All air traffic at Abidjan airport was halted September 26 when Cote d'Ivoire's national air traffic controllers, the local branch of ASECNA, launched a strike. Union contacts told us the strike was called to protest "inappropriate working conditions", which included outdated radar equipment as well as unspecified contraventions of international professional standards related to pay and benefits. The strike, which grounded even UN flights in and out of Abidjan, was unannounced, and union contacts told us it is planned to last three days. Controllers did make an exception to allow President Gbagbo and South African President Mbeki to fly to Ouagadougou the morning of September 26, for a suddenly-announced trip to meet with President Campaore of Burkina Faso.

¶2. As of the afternoon of September 26th, the union was still in negotiations with the Ministry of Transport. No word was available as to the progress of talks. Contacts from Air France tell us that they have a flight en route from Paris scheduled to arrive around 1800 local time which they will divert to Lome if the aircraft is not allowed to land here. We will monitor the situation closely.
Valle